VIDALIA VEGETABLE NEWS

Volume 11 Number 1 January 2007

VIDALIA ONION COMMITTEE SELECTS OFFICERS

The Vidalia Onion Committee met as usual the third Thursday of January. The January meeting is when officers are selected for different positions. At this meeting, Bo Herndon was elected Chairman and Michael Hively was selected as Vice-Chairman. Finally, Otha Dickson was elected as Secretary/Treasurer.

Growers had a very good year last year and this is reflected in the collected funds at the VOC. They have sufficient funds to carry out their current promotional and advertising plans for this year. They did lose some funding from the Ga. Dept. of Agriculture, but this may only be a temporary situation.

The VOC is continuing their efforts to collect assessments on salad onions. This has been made difficult because they don’t fit the standard 40-lb configuration.

There was some discussions after the meeting about acreage. It was estimated that direct-seeded onions may be as high as 1,000 acres and organic onion acres may be over 200 acres.

PESTICIDE LICENSING GOES HIGH TECH

Pesticide license examinations will only be offered online after March 2007. The Georgia legislature took funding from the Ga. Dept. of Agriculture to fund this new initiative. Pesticide exams will now be offered by the technical colleges across the state. Currently only Athens Technical College has the exams available online, but this should change quickly if it hasn’t already.

The fee structure will be $45.00 to take the exam or to retake it if you fail. State employees will also have to pay this exam fee. The state will continue to charge the $25.00 fee for the license and state employees will be exempt from this fee.

There is a website that has additional information:

http://www.gapestexam.com

UPCOMING EVENTS IN ORGANICS

Gerard Krewer and myself will be offering a day long agent training ‘Commercial Organic Production’ at the Coffee County extension office in Douglas. This training will
meet on March 7, 2007 from 10:00 am – 3:00 pm. Lunch will be provided and those wishing to attend the Georgia Organics Conference will have their registration for this event and one night’s lodging paid for. Georgia Organics will hold their conference March 8-10, 2007 at the Central Square Complex in Douglas. For more information on the conference, check out their website at:

http://www.georgiaorganics.org/

FROM MY DESK

I was not able to attend the VOC banquet held last weekend, but I heard it was standing room only. I attended the American Society for Horticultural Science Southern Region meeting in Mobile, AL over the weekend. Four of the talks in the Vegetable section were on organic production. This was definitely the year of organics. I’ve had an opportunity to visit several organic onion fields and they all looked very good. Onions in general appeared to be in good shape. I’m starting off the year with the first newsletter late, perhaps a portent of things to come. Talk to you next month.

Regards,

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